



1.0 CHAPTER 1 - PLANNING FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is the official statement of the Town Council of Port Deposit setting forth policies concerning desirable future growth which serves as a guide to public and private development decisions. It provides the basis for the preparation of specific policies, programs and legislation, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, and other actions which implement the policies set forth in the Plan.

The Plan is comprised of several major elements that are prepared in such a manner that they form an integrated, unified document for guiding future growth and development. As a policy document it is comprehensive and long range in nature. It is comprehensive in that it encompasses the entire geographic area of the Town, and areas that are anticipated to eventually be annexed by the Town, and includes all functional elements that bear upon its physical development, such as transportation, land use, water resources, and community facilities. It is long range in that it looks beyond current issues to problems and opportunities related to future growth through 2030.

1.2 A VISION FOR PORT DEPOSIT

The Town of Port Deposit is a place with a unique identity. A waterfront community located on the Susquehanna River, Port Deposit is an attractive, predominately residential community that is visible from Interstate 95. It has a distinct character, unique among most areas in the region. The Town of Port Deposit maintains significant resources composed of historic achievements and personages, historic structures, the natural scenic aspects of granite cliffs and terraces, as well as the grandeur of the 444 mile-long Susquehanna River.

Although there are goals and objectives in each of the Comprehensive Plan elements, the overall vision for the Town is critical to directing community decisions. The vision ensures that the goals of the Town are reflected clearly in the Comprehensive Plan and furthermore, can be used as a benchmark on which to base future Town decisions. The Town has developed the following vision statement to guide growth and development in a manner that supports the values of the community and the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The vision for the Town of Port Deposit is adapted from the Town's 1991 Revitalization Plan. The vision is:

The Town of Port Deposit is an economically revitalized community that seeks to promote and enhance the inherent Nineteenth Century character of its Old Town, preserve its unique natural resources and association with its riverfront, and stimulate new development that strengthens the Town's traditional core.



1.3 THE FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

As Port Deposit and the surrounding communities grow and change over the next twenty years, this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for making public and private decisions regarding the Town's growth and development. This Plan presents a future vision of Port Deposit into the year 2030 along with recommendations for bringing that vision to fruition. The ideas of the Plan are a distillation of the community's many desires, tempered by what seems feasible and reasonable. This Plan is not intended to be a static document. It should be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect new development trends, shifts in the economy, or changes in the community's goals and objectives.

Port Deposit finds itself in a rapidly changing environment. By annexing the approximately 1,250 acre former Bainbridge Naval Training Center property, and by supporting further annexations as described in this plan, the Town will be able to exert control over how surrounding areas will develop in the future. In order to fulfill the community "vision" for preservation and enhancement of Port Deposit's special qualities and the rural historic character of the Town, the Comprehensive Plan addresses growth and economic development from the perspective of blending the old with the new. The sense of uniqueness and pride of place are the guiding forces and strongest motivation for those who have contributed to the realization of this document.

1.4 LEGAL BASIS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland is the legislative authority for the Town's planning and zoning powers. Section 3.05 sets forth the minimum requirements for a comprehensive plan which shall include, among other things:

- A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards;
- A land use plan element;
- A transportation plan element;
- A community facilities plan element;
- A mineral resources plan element, if current geological information is available;
- An element which shall contain the planning commission's recommendations for land development regulations to implement the plan;
- A sensitive areas element;
- A municipal growth element (required by HB1141 of 2006);
- A water resources element (required by HB1141 of 2006);

The additional plan elements may include:

- Community renewal elements;
- Housing elements;
- Flood control elements;
- Pollution control elements;
- Conservation elements;



- Natural resources elements;
- The general location and extent of public utilities; and
- Priority preservation

Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992

The context for planning in the Town of Port Deposit must also take into consideration the Town's role in implementing the overall growth management policies established by the State of Maryland in the Planning Act of 1992. These policies, stated as "visions" for the future, are:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption is practiced;
6. Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the Town are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these "Visions."

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 also added the requirement that the comprehensive plan contain a Sensitive Areas Element, which describes how the jurisdiction will protect the following sensitive areas:

- Streams and stream buffers,
- 100-year floodplains,
- Endangered species habitats,
- Steep slopes, and
- Other sensitive areas a jurisdiction wants to protect from the adverse impacts of development.

1.5 COMPONENTS OF A GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This Comprehensive Plan provides the basic framework and direction for all components of what may be considered the Town's overall Comprehensive Planning Program. It is not a stand-alone document but is supported and, in turn, supports related policies, programs and legislation which comprise the local growth management program. These growth management tools include local plans and regulations such as the following:

- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Priority Fund Areas (PFA)
- Capital Improvements Program



- BOCA and ICC (International Code Council) Building Codes
- Development Standards and Guidelines

In addition, the Town's growth management program is supported by countywide and regional plans and programs that include:

The Maryland Smart Growth and Priority Funding Act of 1997

The Cecil County Comprehensive Plan

The Cecil County Master Water and Sewer Plan

The Lower Susquehanna Heritage Management Plan

The WILMAPCO Regional Transportation Plan 2025 (RTP 2025)

These tools and others, when used concurrently, are the basis for directing and managing growth in Port Deposit.